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UM NEWS

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IMMEDIATELY

BACK TO SCHOOL MEANS CLASSES IN BUILDING 548
FOR MANY ADULTS AT MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE

sale/jg
8/25/77
state + cs +

By Dennis Sale
UM Information Services

GREAT FALLS---

For millions of students, this fall means back to school in long-familiar schoolhouses and other standard structures recognized for education. But for about 150 students doing graduate work at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, there will be classes as usual in Building No. 548, a "schoolhouse" not so easily identified.

Even with exterior signs stating "Air Force Institute of Technology--Malmstrom Branch" and "University of Montana School of Business Administration Minuteman Education Program," many persons might not recognize Building 548 as the place where 230 adults--mostly Air Force Minuteman Missile launch control officers--have attended classes to earn their master of business administration (MBA) degrees under the Minuteman Education Program (MMEP).

The graduate program is sponsored by the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) and is conducted by the UM School of Business Administration, a school which has its main offices on the University campus in Missoula, 165 miles southwest of Great Falls.

Dr. Bernard J. Bowlen, UM professor of business administration, resident administrator of the MBA degree program for the AFIT, said the graduate degree program in business administration was established in 1963 with three basic objectives in mind:

--To aid in recruiting missile officers.

--To provide business graduates for the Air Force, which is looked upon as one of the biggest businesses in the nation.

--To provide Air Force officers with an interesting and positive activity in their off-duty hours.

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Although the MBA degree program at Malmstrom originally was established for the benefit of missile launch control officers in 1963, the program has since been opened up to non-missile officers, noncommissioned officers and some civilians.

"When fall classes start September 27, we will have about 150 students in the program, including 10 civilians from the Great Falls area," Bowlen said.

Citing the reasons for opening up the graduate business administration program to civilians, Bowlen said, "The most important reason was the desire on the part of the Air Force to identify with the Great Falls community itself and with the entire state of Montana.

"UM President Richard C. Bowers also was very keen on the idea of making the University's resources available to a broader community rather than just the Air Force community itself. One of the first questions Dr. Bowers asked us when we met him after he became UM president in mid-July 1974 was how can we expand the MBA degree program to involve the civilian population?"

Under the MBA program, course work is arranged to fit the schedules of the military participants. AFIT classes meet for two hours every fifth day, giving officers of the 341st Strategic Missile Wing who form crews manning the Minuteman Missile sites near Great Falls time to complete their four to five monthly duty assignments at the sites.

Bowlen said all of the courses required for the graduate degree are available at Malmstrom Air Force Base. For a person without a business background, a maximum of 16 courses is required, thus a person enrolling for two courses per quarter would finish the entire program in about two years.

The only MBA program participants who don't pay fees for enrolling in the advanced degree program are the Minuteman Missile officers. Other military personnel participating in the program pay several fees, while the civilians pay regular UM fees plus

\$50 per credit hour, which is the average cost per student to the Air Force.

Facilities available to those enrolled in the graduate degree program include the AFIT Computer Center, established in 1974, which now has a modern Digital Equipment Co. PDP II Computer. The PDP II eventually will be used in conjunction with some computer operations on the UM campus in Missoula.

"Eventually the computer equipment at Malmstrom will be linked by telephone line to the computer equipment on the Missoula campus, so the equipment at UM can be used by those enrolled in the MBA degree program at Malmstrom," Bowlen said. Director of the AFIT Computer Center at Malmstrom is Gregory Taillon, who is from New Hampshire.

"An in-house library at Malmstrom also has been growing over the years," Bowlen said. "We think we have the largest collection of annual reports, perhaps in the state, housed in our building."

From three graduates in 1970, the number of graduates in the three-to-four-year MBA program at Malmstrom has increased to about 30 per year. Most of those enrolled in the program are from out-of-state communities. The average age of the students is about 25.

Bowlen, who has been resident administrator of the MBA program at Malmstrom since 1968, commented on "the excellent support" the program has had from the Great Falls business community.

"At one time or another, most of the business leaders in Great Falls have been in this building to conduct a seminar, or they have otherwise involved themselves with the activities of our MBA program," Bowlen said. "We also have had a number of national figures visit us, including L. L. Morgan, Peoria, Ill., president of the Caterpillar Tractor Co.; John R. Slothower, Portland, Ore., vice president of Georgia-Pacific Lumber Co., and Milton Friedman, Nobel prize-winning economist from the University of Chicago."

A number of representatives from various schools of business administration also

have participated in the MBA classes at Malmstrom, including Dr. Hans Brems, professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana; Dr. Joseph W. McGuire, vice president of the University of California at Berkeley, who is former dean of business at the University of Illinois, and Dr. George S. Odiorne, former dean of the School of Business at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, who is now dean of the School of Business at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Besides Bowlen, other UM faculty who teach in the MBA degree program at Malmstrom include three associate professors--Dr. Larry L. Redinbaugh, Dr. J. Holton Wilson and Lieut. Col. W. Dennis Patzig, Ph.D.--and two assistant professors--Dr. Barry T. Lewis and Dr. Ronald J. Walker.

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